

WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION ASSESSMENT DISTRICT



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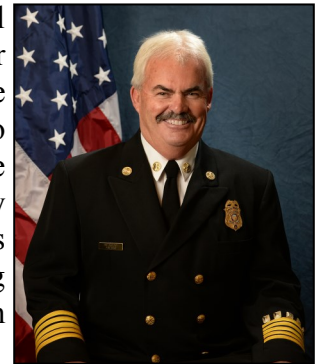
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Santa Barbara County Fire History

Year	Fire Name	Acres	Homes Lost
1955	Refugio	84,770	Several
1964	Coyote	67,000	100+
1971	Romero	14,538	4
1977	Sycamore	805	234
1977	Hondo	10,000	0
1979	Eagle	4,530	5
1990	Painted Cave	4,900	524
1993	Marre	43,864	0
2002	Sudden	7,160	0
2004	Gaviota	7,440	1
2007	Zaca	240,207	0
2008	Gap	9,445	0
2008	Tea	1,940	238
2009	Jesusita	8733	80
2016	Sherpa	7,474	0
2016	Rey	32,606	0
2016	Canyon	12,518	0
2017	Thomas	281,893	1,063

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

As I write this letter, Santa Barbara County is still digging out from the worst natural disaster in our history. The debris flow of January 9th resulted in the deaths of 21 of our fellow community members and two young people remain missing. Beyond the incalculable human loss of life and injury, the loss of so many homes and the impact on so many families remains uncertain. What is not in question is the increasing number of fire disasters in California and the West in general.



This year alone Santa Barbara was challenged by the Alamo, Whittier and Thomas Fires. The damage to our watershed is significant in all cases and we are still dealing the impacts of the Sherpa and Rey fires. The fire/flood cycle has long been a part of the history of Santa Barbara County, but these past few years have been particularly tragic ones.

The challenges of managing our wildfire environment and still preserving the character that we love about our Santa Barbara Community remains a daunting task. The next chapter of this relationship with our environment is just starting.

We are proud to have you as partners in our Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District. In the face of disaster like we faced this year, this may not seem like a big deal. It is. As community partners you have accepted the responsibility of being prepared for the inevitable wildfires that are a feature of life in Santa Barbara.

Patrick J. McElroy

THE WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

Properties in the Foothill and Extreme Foothill Zones of the City of Santa Barbara High Fire Hazard Areas are at higher risk of damage from wildfires due to their topography, climate and amount of combustible vegetation present. The Assessment District provides property owners within these high fire risk areas additional fire prevention services to reduce the severity and damage from wildfires. These services include: Defensible Space Evaluations, Vegetation Road Clearance, annual Chipping Program and Vegetation Management.

2018 DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Sheffield/Parma.....	February 26
Las Canoas.....	March 12
Eucalyptus Hill.....	March 26
Sycamore Canyon/Las Alturas.....	April 9
Lower Riviera.....	April 23
San Roque/Ontare.....	April 30
Las Tunas.....	May 14
Circle/Westmont.....	May 29
West Mountain/Coyote.....	June 4

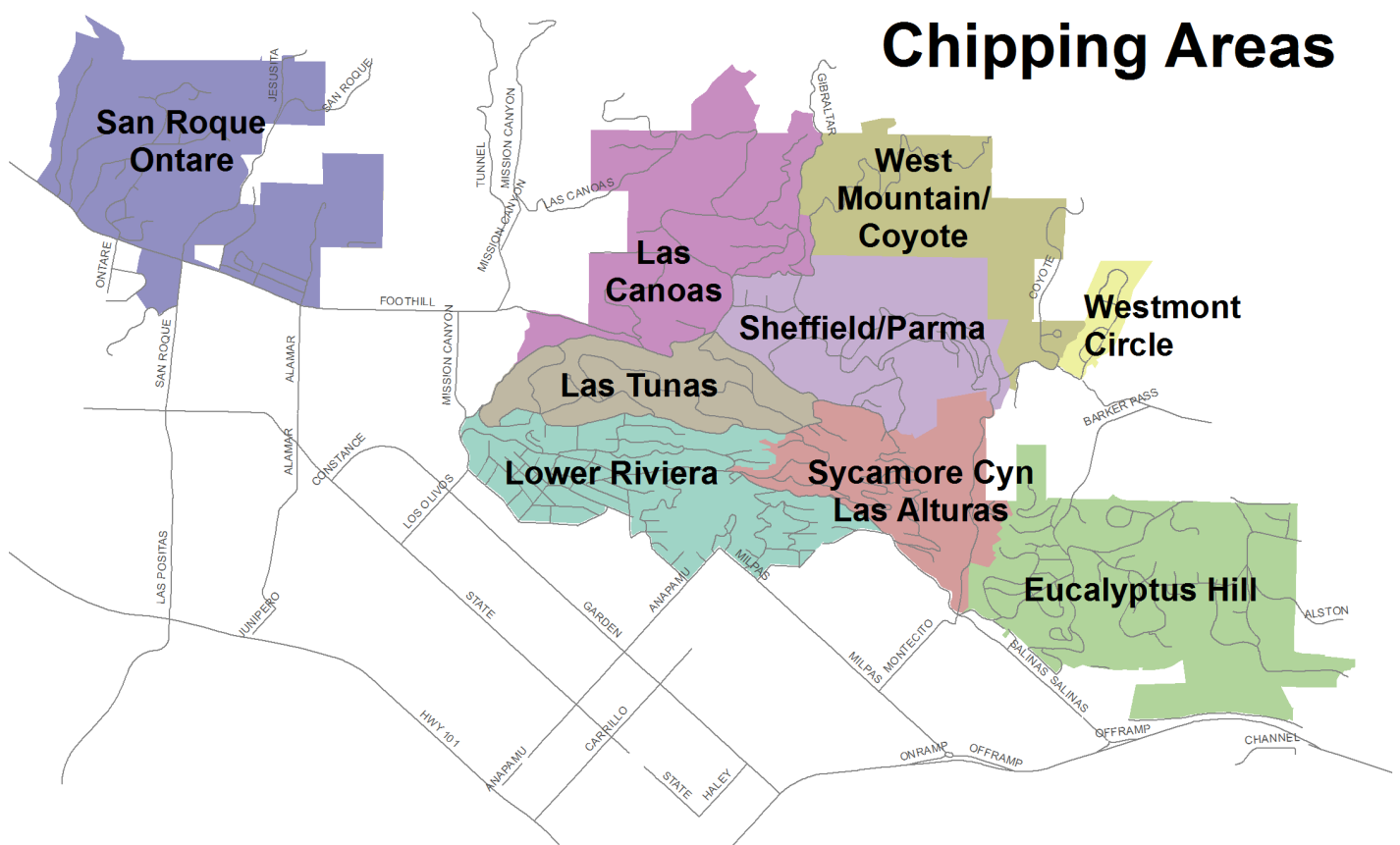
Exotic pest plants that will **NOT** be chipped include:

Arundo • All species of ivy •
Castor bean • Fennel •
All species of broom • Ice plant
Tobacco weed
Any type of grass • Tamarisk
Any kind of Bamboo

Please put your cut vegetation out on roadways **no sooner than two weeks** and **no later than the day** your chipping area is scheduled to begin (second passes will not be made).

Please refer to the map of chip areas below. For further detail visit our website at SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WFSAD or call us at 965-5254

Chipping Areas



CHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

Chipping services are provided to encourage property owners to create defensible space and provide a cost effective way to dispose of cut material.

As part of the City's environmental efforts, our goal is to re-use 99% of all chipped material. To achieve this goal we need your help. If you can use chips on your property please contact us at 965-5254. A load of chips is approximately 14 cubic yards. Partial loads are not available.

The chipping instructions (right) outline the specific requirements. Vegetation that does not meet these requirements will not be chipped and will be left on site. The property owner will be responsible for the legal disposal of any material that cannot be chipped.

- Cut vegetation should be laid out in a pile along the street outside the drivable roadway.
- The cut end of all vegetation must face the street so we can easily handle the material.
- Brush should be left in long lengths (4-7 feet). This makes it is much easier to chip.
- Cut branches should be no greater than 10 inches in diameter.
- Material in plastic bags will not be picked up.
- Twine or string must not be used to tie vegetation.
- Rocks or other debris will not be chipped.
- Long piles OK as long as they are not over 4 feet in height.
- Old dead vegetation that has been lying around for years will not be chipped (this type of vegetation damages chipper blades).
- Pine needles or other leaf litter cannot be chipped.
- Piles pushed or moved by mechanical means, i.e. tractor, will not be chipped.
- Grasses, palm fronds, succulents or agaves will not be chipped.

WHAT IS ROAD CLEARANCE? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Vegetation Road Clearance is one of the programs provided within the Assessment District. It reduces the overall amount of flammable vegetation along roadways. Flammable vegetation along roadways creates hazardous conditions, especially during an evacuation. Burning vegetation along roads can force the closure of important evacuation routes, impedes the ingress of first responders and the egress of residents evacuating from areas. It is important to maintain your vegetation bordering roadways on your property year round.



DEFENSIBLE SPACE EVALUATIONS

WHAT IS DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

Defensible Space is the landscaped area around your home maintained to reduce the fire danger to structures and your property. A good defensible space area is key in providing a buffer between an approaching wildfire. It can make the difference between saving or losing your home.

Defensible Space Evaluations are informative and free to all residents of the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District.

Defensible Space Tips

Reduce Fire Ladders: Separate and space your plants both horizontally and vertically.

Reduce Ignition Sources: Embers may blow miles ahead of the fire. Frequently check and remove leaves and debris from roofs and gutters. Check under decks and porches, deck furniture, play/storage structures, doormats, and potted plants.

Trees: Remove branches from the ground a minimum of 6 feet or 1/3 the total height of the tree. Remove all dead branches.

Brush: Remove dead fuel and limb up 2 feet from the ground. Keep separation between shrubs, brush and trees.

Grass: Mow to 4 inches from the ground.

Debris Piles: Do not pile wood chips or mulch on your property. Spread and maintain them no greater than a 4 to 4 inch depth. Compost should be kept in an appropriate container.

Ornamental Plants: Should be irrigated, maintained and pruned year-round.



WHAT IS INVOLVED IN A DEFENSIBLE SPACE EVALUATION?

During a Voluntary Defensible Space Evaluation we meet on site with you and walk around your property. We will discuss your current landscaping, exterior building construction, assess its current condition for things that are beneficial as well as any additional interior improvements that can be made.



DEFENSIBLE SPACE & BIRD NESTING

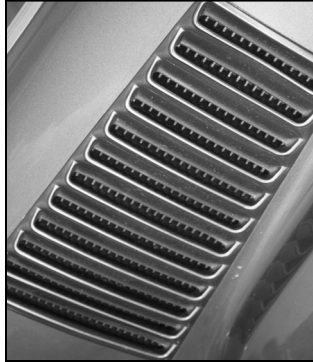
Nesting and breeding birds are impacted by vegetation removal. Bird nesting season occurs between April 1st through July 30th when defensible space work is being completed. To protect nesting and breeding birds and comply with California Department of Fish & Wildlife regulations, it is required to consult a qualified biologist to determine if nesting presence exists prior to tree or vegetation removal in nesting season.



FOR A VOLUNTARY DEFENSIBLE SPACE EVALUATION PLEASE CALL 965-5254

EMBER INTRUSION

One of the reasons homes can be lost during wildfires is when embers generated during wildfires enter vents, crawlspaces and rain gutters. It is critical to keep all vents and openings covered by a 1/8" mesh or State Fire Marshal approved vents that prevent ember intrusion, in addition to keeping your rain gutters clear of leaf litter year-round.



PATIO FURNITURE



Wooden and plastic patio furniture left outside during a wildfire can pose a threat to your home if embers land or ignite cushions or wood. Winds generated by a wildfire can blow burning material against the structure and spread fire to other parts of the property. We recommend homeowners reduce the amount of flammable furniture on decks and around the home and to remove and store patio cushions during an evacuation.

CALIFORNIA FIRESAFE GRANT

In 2017 the City of Santa Barbara Fire Department received a \$17,500 grant from the California Firesafe Council for vegetation removal in the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District. We are making your money go further with this grant and reducing flammable vegetation in the Las Canoas and San Roque areas over the next 2 years.

These areas were determined to be of critical importance by a team of UCSB, Bren School of Environmental Science & Management graduate students after evaluating fuel loads, topography and types of treatment. They determined that vegetation removal in the identified grant areas would provide the maximum benefit to the community.

Working with CALFIRE crews, more than 8 acres of fuel reduction in the Las Canoas area has already been completed. This fuel reduction project will be conducted outside of bird nesting seasons with the completion of a vegetation management project in the San Roque foothills scheduled for early 2019.



MULCH AND WOOD CHIP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

After more than five years of drought in the Santa Barbara area, there has been an increase in the amount of homes utilizing mulch and woodchips in waterwise landscaping. While woodchips and mulch provide excellent ground cover and retain moisture in soil, it is important to avoid creating a potential wildfire hazard by applying them improperly. The follow are answers to questions frequently asked by homeowners regarding wood chip and mulch use in High Fire Hazard Areas:

Where should I put mulch around my home?

With both mulch and woodchips it is important to avoid spreading them too close to structures as they will provide a source of fuel during a wildfire. We recommend placing woodchips and mulch at least 30 feet from any structures.

How much should I use ?

Wood chips and mulch should not be deeper than 4 inches from the top soil.

Should I replace my lawn with wood chips?

When converting lawns into more waterwise landscapes it is important to evaluate the size of the area and its proximity to the home. We recommend using fire resistant mulches such as lava rock, gravel or synthetic fire resistant alternatives in areas adjacent to structures.

Should I use leaf litter from my trees as mulch or should I remove all of it?

Many of our native tree species deposit leaf litter throughout the year that acts as a natural mulch, breaking down over time and becoming soil. Removing all leaf litter around the home can reduce fire danger, but it will also remove important nutrients from being deposited back into the soil. We recommend reducing leaf litter near the home and in areas that have built up more than 4 inches in depth. It is also important to reduce litter buildup from resinous species such as pine and eucalyptus.

Does the Fire Department deliver wood chips?

During our Annual Chipping program we are able to provide wood chips to residents of the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District at no additional cost on a first-come, first-serve basis. The chips provided are from a variety of both native and non-native vegetation and range in size and quality. The trucks used require ample room to unload and deliver approximately 4 cubic yards of wood chips.

We will not deliver partial loads of wood chips.

If you would like to request wood chips, please contact us at the number below.



INTERESTED IN RECEIVING WOOD CHIPS? CALL 965-5254

THE THOMAS FIRE

In 2010 the State of California began experiencing one of the most severe droughts in the state's history. Over the next five years conditions worsened with tree mortality and vegetation die-off progressing at an alarming rate. An estimated 100 million trees state wide succumbed to the critical lack of water during this time. While storms during late winter of 2017 provided much needed relief to aquifers and reservoirs across the region, they produced an intense growth of grasses and vegetation. A period of dry weather and low rainfall spanning more than 200 days on the south coast followed. By early December 2017 we began to see Red-Flag conditions appear frequently throughout the Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles county areas.



On the morning of December 4, 2017 the Thomas Fire erupted to the north of Santa Paula near Thomas Aquinas College during severe wind conditions and moved into the Santa Barbara front country. Tragically, 1,063 homes were destroyed and Cory Iverson, a 32-year-old firefighter with CALFIRE and Virginia Pesola a resident of Santa Paula lost their lives in what became the largest wildfire in the state's history. Over the next 38 days more than 8,500 firefighters and dozens of agencies culminated to combat the rapidly progressing fire front. The fire was almost entirely held above the City of Santa Barbara with only a small area of Parma Park burned.

While residents of the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District were fortunate enough to avoid loss of property it is important to stay vigilant in the maintenance of defensible space as neighboring communities continue to recover and rebuild.

In the early morning hours of January 9, 2018 the South Coast Region experienced the first significant rainfall of the winter season. Due to the amount of vegetation burned during the Thomas Fire and lack of ground cover, multiple debris flows developed in Montecito and continued down drainages and streams, destroying 129 residences and damaging more than 300 homes. The loss of life during the debris flow was catastrophic with 21 fatalities and 2 others still missing.





CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
FIRE DEPARTMENT

SBFD Website
SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WFSAD

SBFD Facebook
facebook.com/SantaBarbaraCityFire

Visit our Blog!
WFSAD.blogspot.com

Thank you for your continual
support.

Since 2006 we've:

Chipped more than
3370 tons of vegetation
through our annual
chipping program

Cleared 169 miles of
roadways through our
road clearance program

Treated 137 acres of
flammable vegetation through
vegetation management

Evaluated over 423
properties to assess potential
defensible
space improvements

City of Santa Barbara
Fire Department
925 Chapala Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

From drought to fire and flood, Santa Barbara County and the surrounding areas have endured enormous challenges and hardships over the past seven years.

As we look to the future homeowners, residents, community leaders and surrounding agencies will continually engage with each other using cohesive strategies to mitigate problems as they occur and to prevent unforeseeable disasters in the future.

The lessons from our past will continually shape the decisions we make as we move on from the events that have struck our communities. As residents of the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District you play a critical role in ensuring the safety of our community.



The rebuilding and healing process will be not be easy. Working together we can create a safer and better tomorrow.

The City of Santa Barbara Fire Department would like to thank all homeowners in the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District that have helped protect our community and for those who have given so much to so many in this turbulent time.

YOUR ASSESSMENT DOLLARS PROVIDE FOR:

**Vegetation Management Projects • Defensible Space Evaluations • Vegetation Chipping
Public Education & Outreach • Vegetation Road Clearance**